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Human Services Committee

CT General Assembly
State Capital
Hartford, CT 06106

Members of the Human Services Committee,

I am writing in support of S.B. Number 989.

My wife was in 2 different nursing homes from Jan of 2019 until she passed away in Jan of 2022.

I spent hours there with her except during the Covid lockout. I visited 7 days a week from 9 in the morning until 8 at night. Suffice it to say there was no way I was leaving her there alone. I had seen too much in the way of neglect, medication errors etc. She was the victim (yes, victim) of a complete break to her femur through no fault of her own. She was pushed out of her bed when being changed before bedtime. She was 88 years old and absolutely unable to move on her own. This was investigated by DPH and in my opinion, not enough done. Facility walked away with, as usual, little consequence. I never did receive a final communication from DPH on their findings.

I want to get to the focus of my testimony. I could go on and on with details of her care or lack thereof but we've heard it all. My focus is on ENFORCEMENT. There are laws in place regarding nursing homes. Rules. We've all heard them over and over ad-nauseum. LTCOP has done well helping us to understand what those rules are. We've heard over and over again "oh no, they can't do that". I ask "or what?". Nothing. No consequences. No accountability. LTCOP goes above and beyond even though they too are understaffed keeping families and residents informed. They see it. They know. They are also an advocacy group with no power to change what they see. They guide and assist in reports to DPH which is great. I must say I have found DPH lacking. I was looking for a word stronger than 'lacking' because it doesn't describe what we've all experienced. We have sent in formal complaints. Some with pictures to absolutely no avail.

This just is not good enough. Why are violations and accountability overlooked in this industry but not tolerated in others. I recently heard someone make an analogy to day care. CT says 1 person to every 3-4 infants/toddlers. A daycare center in violation of this would be closed down. Period.

We need transparency to see whose pockets are being lined with the profits. Companies (investors) would not own a number of facilities if they were not making money. It is absolutely at the expense of residents. We need accountability. Bigger and stiffer penalties. It comes back to ENFORCEMENT. I support all that is contained in this bill but it is all for naught if not enforced. We need to see change NOW. This industry has been getting away with murder (yep, murder) for years.

I sat for hours and days and heard it all and saw it. Most days I would sit there and think "these people are alive in spite of them". I honestly don't think I've overstated it.

Respectfully,

Debra Ellis